

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1: (Currently Amended) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a user node to a remote node over a network, the user ~~node having~~ node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

- 5 extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input thereto, which product code is disposed on or in close association with an associated product;
- in response to the step of extracting, the application software:
- assembling a message packet containing a destination address of an intermediate
- 10 node on the network, a source address that defines the location of the user node on the network and a data field that includes the product information, and
- transmitting the message packet to the intermediate node on the network;
- receiving from the intermediate node on the network, instructional code that instructs the user node to connect to one of the remote nodes on the network that has a defined
- 15 association with the extracted product information defined at the intermediate node; and
- connecting the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the received instructional code such that connection to the remote node is controlled by the intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein connections to remote nodes having defined relationships to product information are ~~controlled—only~~ controlled only by the
- 20 intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting, and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the remote node.

Claim 2: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code comprises machine readable code.

Claim 3: (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Claim 2~~ Claim 2, wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the machine readable code to extract the product code information

therefrom.

Claim 4: (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the machine readable code comprises a bar code.

Claim 5: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents a UPC.

Claim 6: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents an ISBN number.

Claim 7: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents an EAN number.

Claim 8: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, and further comprising the step of interfacing with the network utilizing network routing information embedded with the instructional code.

Claim 9: (Currently Amended) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a user node to a remote node over a network, the user ~~node having~~ node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

5 extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input thereto, which product code is disposed on or in close association with an associated product;

 in response to the step of extracting, the application software:

 assembling a message packet containing the product information,

10 transmitting the message packet containing the product information to the intermediate node on the network; and

 at the intermediate node:

 comparing the product information with an associative database disposed at the intermediate node and having stored therein associations with a plurality of product information

15 and associated routing information to at least one of the remote nodes on the network, and
determining if there is a match; and
if there is a match, returning instructional ~~code from~~ code from the intermediate
node to the user node, which instructional code has embedded ~~therein~~ therein the routing
information to the location on the network of the at least one of the remote nodes;
20 receiving from the intermediate node on the network, the instructional code that
instructs the user node to connect to one of the remote nodes on the network that has a defined
association with the extracted product information defined at the intermediate node; and
connecting the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the
received instructional code such that connection to the remote node is controlled by the
25 intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein connections to remote nodes having
defined relationships to product information are ~~controlled only~~ controlled only by the
intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting,
and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the remote
node.

Claim 10: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 9, wherein the message packet
comprises a data transmission that includes a destination address of the intermediate node on the
network, a source address that defines the location of the user node on the network and a data
field that includes the product information.

Claim 11: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein the destination
address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the user
node.

Claim 12: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein the application
software installed at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 13: (Cancelled)

Claim 14: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the destination

address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the user node.

Claim 15: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein the application software installed at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 16: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code is visible.

Claim 17: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code has the product information embedded within a visible indicia.

Claim 18: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17, wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the product code with an optical scanner that is operable to extract the product information from the product code.

Claim 19: (Currently Amended) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a computing device at a user node on a network to at least one of a plurality of remote nodes on the network, the computing device at the user node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input to the computing device at the user node;

in response to the step of extracting, the application software:

assembling a data transmission containing the product information, and

transmitting the data transmission to an intermediate node on the network;

receiving from the intermediate node on the network instructional code that instructs the computing device at the user node to connect to one of the remote nodes on the network that has a defined association with the extracted product information,

interfacing with the network utilizing network routing information embedded within the instructional code, which network routing information uniquely defines the one of the

remote nodes on the network; and

connecting the computing device at the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the received instructional code such that connection to the one of the remote ~~nodes~~ nodes is controlled by the intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein
20 connections to remote ~~nodes~~ nodes on the network in response to the step of extracting are controlled only by the intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting, and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the one of the remote nodes.

Claim 20: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the product code comprises machine readable code.

Claim 21: (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Claim 20~~ Claim 20, wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the machine readable code with a scanning machine to extract the product code information therefrom.

Claim 22: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 20, wherein the machine readable code comprises a bar code.

Claim 23: (Cancelled)

Claim 24: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the message packet comprises a message packet that includes the destination address that defines network routing information to the intermediate node on the network, the source address that defines network routing information to the user node on the network and a data field that includes the product
5 information.

Claim 25: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24, wherein the destination address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the computing device at the user node.

Claim 26: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25, wherein the application software installed on the computing device at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 27: (Canceled)